

Each year, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) reports on the status of public transportation in Washington State. The annual report provides uniform data to transit providers, the Legislative Transportation committees, and local and regional governments.¹

Today, there are 28 local governmental public transportation systems in Washington State—20 of which are Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBAs). This introduction includes a statewide map showing the location and service areas of these systems. The two newest transit systems, Asotin County Transit and Columbia County Public Transportation, are reporting data for the first time this year. Not included in this report are Washington State Ferries and the many non-profit and for-profit public transportation providers across the state. A summary of community transportation providers will be provided as a companion to the Summary of Public Transportation when collection of data is complete.

Database Has Streamlined Reporting and Analysis

WSDOT collects transit system data electronically and downloads the information into a database. This improves the accuracy of the data and simplifies the preparation of this data-intensive report. In addition, the data becomes more useful by storing information in an organized format so the data can be easily retrieved and used for additional purposes.

Organization of the Summary

This year's summary is organized in five sections and four appendices.

Highlights

This section briefly describes significant developments for public transportation in Washington State during 2005 and 2006. A broad range of public transportation programs and issues are summarized.

Statewide Operations Overview

This section presents a statewide picture of transit performance:

- statewide ridership increased 1.8 percent over 2004,
 - fixed route ridership increased 1.14 percent over 2004,
 - demand response ridership increased 2.12 percent over 2004,
 - vanpool ridership increased 11.50 percent over 2004,
- service miles increased for most bus, light rail, and commuter services,
- local tax revenues increased, and
- expenses for services increased.

The statewide operations overview also shows transit's performance against a set of benchmark measures created in 2002.

Operating Characteristics for Each System

The bulk of the report is devoted to profiles of each transit system's operating characteristics, services, and achievements for 2005, accompanied by its objectives for 2006 and plans through 2011. The profiles are divided into three sections according to the size of the transit system and then organized alphabetically.

¹The annual summary of public transportation is required by Section 35.58.2796 RCW.

Systems Serving Urbanized Areas

- C-TRAN
- Community Transit
- Everett Transit
- King County Metro Transit
- Pierce Transit
- Sound Transit
- Spokane Transit Authority

Systems Serving Small City Areas

- Ben Franklin Transit
- Cowlitz Transit Authority d.b.a. CUBS
- Intercity Transit
- Kitsap Transit
- Link Transit
- Skagit Transit
- Whatcom Transportation Authority
- Yakima Transit

Systems Serving Rural Areas

- Asotin County Transit
- Clallam Transit System
- Columbia County Public Transportation
- Garfield County Public Transportation
- Grant Transit Authority
- Grays Harbor Transportation Authority
- Island Transit
- Jefferson Transit Authority
- Mason County Transportation Authority
- Pacific Transit
- Pullman Transit
- Twin Transit
- Valley Transit

Appendices

The appendices include a glossary of terms related to public transportation and statewide statistical summaries of operating and financial characteristics.

Public Transportation Continues Upward Trend

Public transportation in Washington plays an increasingly vital and well-supported role in the state's transportation system. The legislature approved significant new funding for transportation and many communities have stepped up with local dollars to close gaps in funding due to Initiative 695. Consensus is building around the idea that our state must use a broad range of strategies to meet our growing travel demand, exacerbated by higher fuel prices and congested roadways. The information contained in this 2005 report suggests that to a great extent this shift in understanding has already taken place.

Public transportation provides access for millions of people to get to work, school, medical appointments, and other everyday activities. After two years of declining ridership primarily due to service cuts, public transportation ridership began to rise in 2003, and continues its second year of steady growth in 2005. In 2005, Washington residents took over 173 million trips using public transportation—a 1.8 percent increase over 2004. The largest increases in passenger trips occurred among mass transit commuter rail, light rail, and vanpool services.

Based on the transit system profiles in this report, transit services have improved in much of the state. Service levels have increased for almost every mode of public transportation, most significantly among services in dense urban areas. Transit agencies have increased levels of service and developed many new products and services to meet the diverse needs of their riders. Illustrative of this, Sound Transit continued operating light rail service in Tacoma, Commuter Rail from Tacoma to Everett, and expanded major construction of the Link Light Rail System, from downtown Seattle to Sea-Tac International Airport. Other transit agencies not located among dense urban corridors have utilized vanpool services to reduce congestion by participating in the Vanpool Investment Program. Updates on public transportation services, construction, and expansion can be found online at the Washington State Department of Transportation, or any of the transit agencies contained in this Summary.

In addition, major projects underway are improving commuter and intercity rail, further developing light rail, and extending the HOV system. The completion of these projects will greatly enhance the effectiveness and attractiveness of public transportation. Milestones reached in the public transportation industry are highlighted in the next chapter of this report.



Washington State Public Transportation Transit Authorities

